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procedure to be out of place in three ways: first, a more satisfactory preliminary selection could have been made by less elaborate methods; second, the elaborate report should contain results from the application of the scales; and third, the distinction should be made between a technical report of the entire procedure for specially trained readers and a simpler report of the application and results of the final scales for teachers and administrators.

FRANK N. FREEMAN

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*The Smith-Towner Bill.*—Under a general title<sup>1</sup> two writers who have been closely connected with the drafting of the Smith-Towner Bill have brought together two types of material. First, they have presented a sketchy historical survey of all the different grants of land and money which the federal government has made to education. Secondly, they have reviewed in a series of chapters the educational needs of which the nation has become aware as a result of the war and for which our present organization and our ordinary resources do not seem to be adequate. In this connection a brief summary is given of the bills now before Congress aiming to meet these needs.

The two lines of discussion thus developed are focused in the conclusion on the Smith-Towner Bill, which is advocated as the only comprehensive solution of current educational problems.

The history of federal subventions leads the authors of this book to the position that such subventions have served in a large way to stimulate the states to develop systems which are in no wise dominated by federal authority.

The conclusion of this part of the book is summarized in the following paragraph:

The precedents, *undisturbed by a single adverse court decision*, prove that it is constitutional for the Federal Government to promote education in a variety of ways. It has been promoting education ever since 1785. Not a session of Congress closes without the passage of acts designed to promote education. To be sure, these acts are for the most part in harmony with precedents already established, but new precedents are constantly being set. On the other hand, for Congress to attempt to usurp the sovereign right of each state to organize, supervise, and administer education within its own borders and specifically and directly for the state's own citizens would clearly be unconstitutional. It is, indeed, unthinkable. Congress has never attempted to do this. It has never been advised or memorialized by educational leaders to attempt it. No one desires this sort of thing to be done; but there are many who feel that the co-operative relationships already established, already justified by their results, should be extended to include educational needs and activities even more important to the welfare of the Nation than those with which the Government has hitherto concerned itself. If Federal co-operation in education can work the miracles which now stand to its credit, and if it can do this without invading in any respect the rights of the states, it can work other sadly needed miracles with the same efficiency and the same freedom from danger [pp. 105-6].

<sup>1</sup> JOHN A. H. KEITH and WILLIAM C. BAGLEY, *The Nation and The Schools*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1920. Pp. xvii+364.

No less emphatic is the contention in the second part of the book that there must be immediate increase in national effort or we shall fall behind in the reduction of illiteracy, in the training of teachers, in Americanization of foreigners, and in other forms of education essential to the maintenance of our institutions. Facts are outlined in support of these conclusions, and vigorous paragraphs are presented to arouse any who may be complacent with the present situation.

This book is the first statement which has appeared from the framers of the Smith-Towner Bill discussing in any way the fundamental principles which they had in mind in making up the measure. It is well that the statement should be made; it is informing, and it will give the careful reader much to think about.

Our authors have a hard time assimilating the present Smith-Hughes Law into their general scheme of stimulation of the states without domination. They let out a feeble protest which, in view of the action of the National Education Association at Salt Lake City, ought to have been italicized. At the end of the chapter on the Smith-Hughes Law, they write:

These new features safeguard the interests of the Nation as a whole as has never been done before by any grant of land or money for educational purposes. Whether the plan is too highly centralized and whether the Federal Board will infringe upon the "autonomy of the States" are matters which the wise years will reveal [p. 100].

Even the superficial reader is likely to go back to this paragraph with a question after reading once more the sentences quoted above:

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In like fashion the student of the history of education will regret the cursory way in which our authors have covered up the sad story of the mismanagement of the federal gifts of lands for education. There are no grosser blunders or more painful exhibitions of incompetency in our history than those which appear in our treatment of federal land grants for schools. Here and there the light breaks through the screen which our authors erect to cover this story, but in the main they keep up their courage remarkably and write such extraordinary sentences as the following:

Interesting as it would be to trace the history of the management and mismanagement of the proceeds of these federal land grants in the several states, the details cannot be recorded here. The interested reader is referred to the illuminating treatise by F. H. Swift, *Public Permanent Common School Funds in the United States*—a book to which the present writers are deeply indebted [p. 31].

This they follow by a rhapsody on the free public school which is our most fundamental institution—traceable it would seem, if one did not know the

facts, to the federal land grants. This is perhaps propaganda, but certainly not history.

The logic of the whole book is of the same type. Put in brief, the argument is as follows. From time to time federal grants have been injected into the school systems of America. The school systems have evolved under local control. The war has made us aware that the local school systems are inadequate. They have never had the insight to meet certain great national needs. They have never supplied the framework for an equally distributed educational opportunity. They have never trained teachers adequately. They have failed in all respects to fulfil the truly national mission of an American school system. Conclusion, give the states more money and there will be an immediate and sudden improvement. Do not under any pretext whatever supervise the states, whose history is full of mismanagement and whose school systems are unbalanced and inadequate. Do not give them policies, but rather more stimulating funds, and all will be well.

Such arguments are hardly likely to persuade anyone who is not already convinced through partisan bias. Such arguments, when substituted for a careful analysis of the bill itself, are in reality unscientific and misleading. One virtue the book has: it prints the full text of the bill. This is a real service. Most people who have been indorsing the bill have never read it. Let them read the bill. There is no better cure for enthusiasm for it.

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*Standards for memory work in the grades.*—The study of the curriculum made by educational experts during the past six years has been one of the most influential factors in molding current educational thought and practice. However, the work thus far only goes to show how much there is to be accomplished. One portion of the elementary-school curriculum which has been almost entirely neglected is the standardizing of requirements for memorizing literary material. Hence, superintendents and teachers will be interested in a recent study<sup>1</sup> in this field which is reported by the Bureau of Educational Research at the University of Illinois.

In order to acquaint children with the best in literature care must be used in selecting the teaching materials. Not only must the reading of literature be carefully guided, but the basis on which material is chosen to be memorized should be even more exacting. The study attempts to show "of what this highly restricted body of material actually consists according to the practice of the schools from which information may be obtained."

The author bases the report directly on fifty courses of study from cities having a population of 25,000 or more. These courses of study were selected from over two hundred courses because they were the "courses which showed the most complete lists of memory material and which contained specific requirements as to the amount of memory work demanded."

<sup>1</sup>VELDA C. BAMESBERGER, *Standard Requirements for Memorizing Literary Material*. University of Illinois Bulletin, 1920, Vol. XVII, No. 26. Pp. 93. \$0.50.